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no. 29

blm - alaska

BLM-AK-GI-91-002-1120-912

frontiers

managing public lands for multiple use

Issue 29 March 1991



Historic photo from the archives of the Anchorage Museum of History and Art was taken by E.A. Hegg around the turn of the century. It shows the Thirty Stamp Mill in Silver Bow Basin, the area where gold was first discovered in Juneau. The mill was built in 1893 and operated till about 1913. None of these buildings are still standing.

u.s. department of the interior • bureau of land management

A-J Mine draft EIS goes out for review

In January BLM released a draft environmental impact statement to the public for review. This draft statement considers the reopening of the old A-J gold mine in Juneau. A famous landmark visible from ships entering the harbor, this historic gold mine was a mainstay of Juneau's economy in the old days.

The project proposed by Echo Bay Exploration Inc. includes the development of surface facilities south of town at Thane Road and the construction of a dam for tailings disposal in Sheep Creek valley.

"It's been a controversial project in Juneau, but on the other hand we've had beautiful cooperation, especially from the municipality and the Division of Governmental Coordination," says David Dorris, BLM's project coordinator for the EIS.

Environmental and socio-economic issues developed during the planning process and public comments helped shape the four tailings disposal alternatives and two surface facility sites analyzed in the draft statement.

BLM Anchorage District Manager Dick Vernimen says, "The A-J Mine project represents an increasing trend in southeast Alaska of reopening inactive mines now that economic conditions are more favorable for gold mining."

The review of what could become one of North America's largest underground gold mines began in November of 1988.

"J.M. Montgomery Consulting Engineers, who prepared the draft for BLM, moved it to where we could have released it to the public in January 1990, but then Echo Bay wanted to reevaluate the project, so we were delayed a year," Dorris said.

A public hearing in Juneau has been tentatively scheduled for

March 12. The public comment period for the draft statement ends March 29.

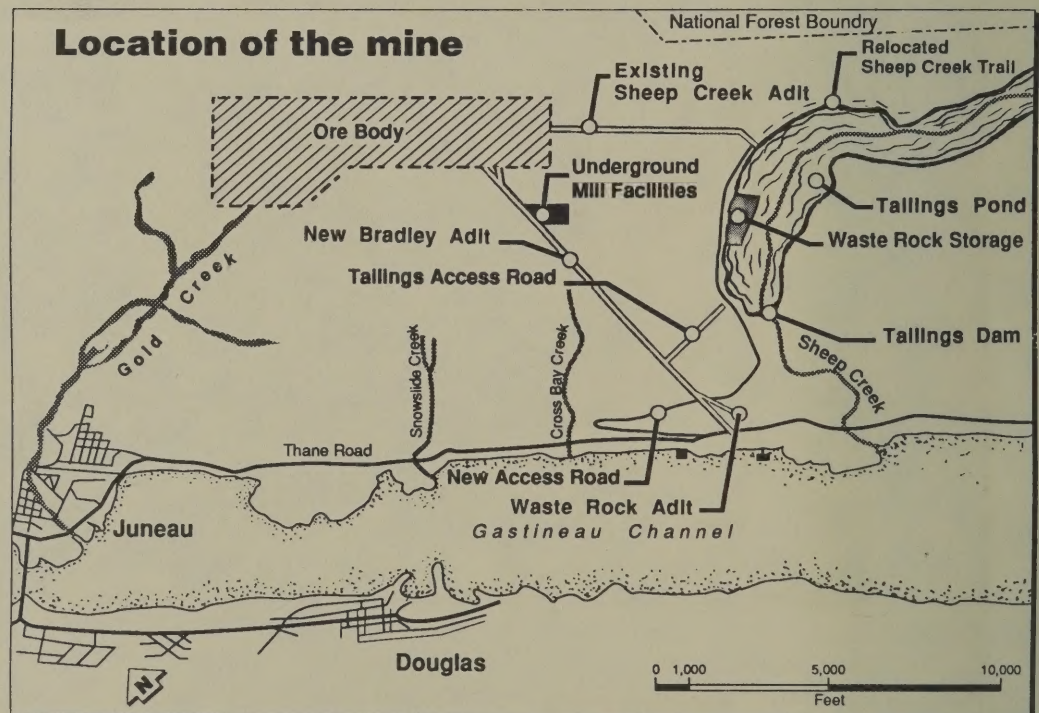
"Depending on the complexity of the comments, we hope to have the final environmental impact statement out by August and the Record of Decision in September," Dorris said.

The DEIS is available in Juneau at the Department of Community Development, the Juneau Memorial Library and the Alaska State Library. Copies of the DEIS can be reviewed at any BLM office in Anchorage, and at the Loussac and U.A.A. libraries. In Fairbanks, the draft can be reviewed at the Noel Wien Library.

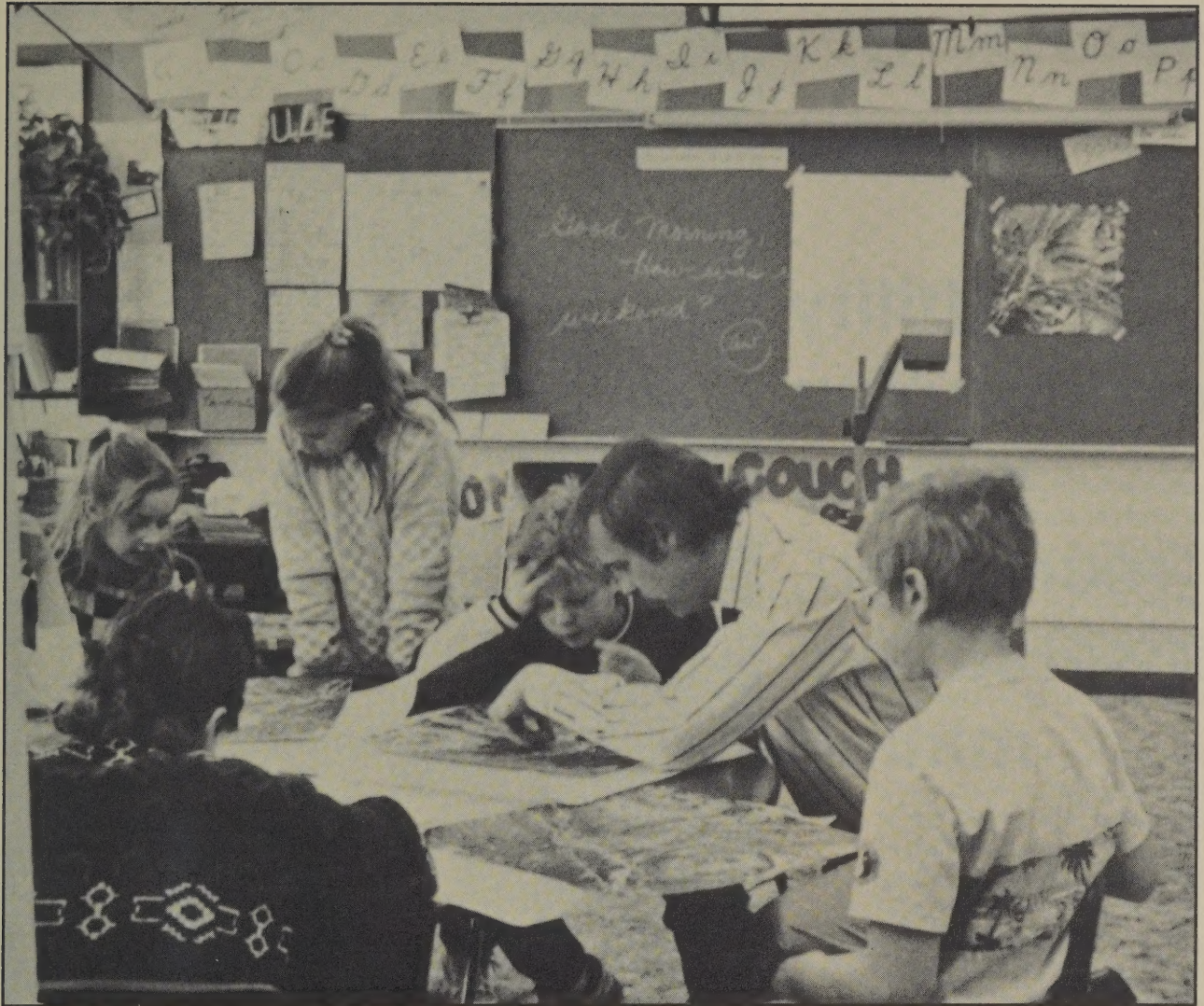
Requests for the DEIS and comments should be directed to A-J Mine Project Manager, BLM, Alaska State Office, 222 West 7th Avenue, #13, Anchorage, AK 99513. Questions about the project can be directed to David Dorris at (907) 271-4409 or toll-free in Alaska at 1-800-478-1236.

—Danielle Allen and Jane Mangus

All of the actual mining would be done under ground. Tunnels, called adits, would bore into the mountain to provide access to the old mine workings. Gold was discovered at Juneau in 1880 at Gold Creek. The A-J-Perseverance ore body produced about three and a half million ounces of gold, or approximately one fourth of all the lode gold ever produced in Alaska. The A-J mine operated from 1893 till 1944 when World War II forced its closure. During its 51 years of operation it produced 3.52 million ounces of refined gold. At its peak it employed 1,000 miners working on three shifts.



BLM teaches youngsters about maps



Cartographer Gust Panos and geologist Greg Balen of BLM's Branch of mapping sciences explain to a group of Anchorage sixth-graders how cartographers use satellite images and aerial photos to produce land maps.

When a sixth grade class at Eagle River Elementary School studied maps as part of their geography unit recently, BLM's Branch of Mapping Sciences was asked to lend its expertise. So cartographer Gust Panos and geologist Greg Balen gathered up equipment and supplies and headed to Eagle River to introduce a group of 30 bright youngsters to maps, how they are made and what they do for us.

"Everyone uses maps," said Panos. "Maps have been around since the ancient Egyptians." He showed the students satellite images of the state of Alaska, then aerial photographs of the

Anchorage area, and finally Eagle River and their school to put maps and aerial photography in a perspective the students could relate to.

One enthusiastic boy raised his hand and said, "I like to draw maps." Panos explained, "That's called cartography." Panos and Balen then gave each student a USGS map and an aerial photograph and explained how the maps were made from aerial photographs. The students also had the opportunity to examine aerial photos in 3D under a mirror stereoscope.

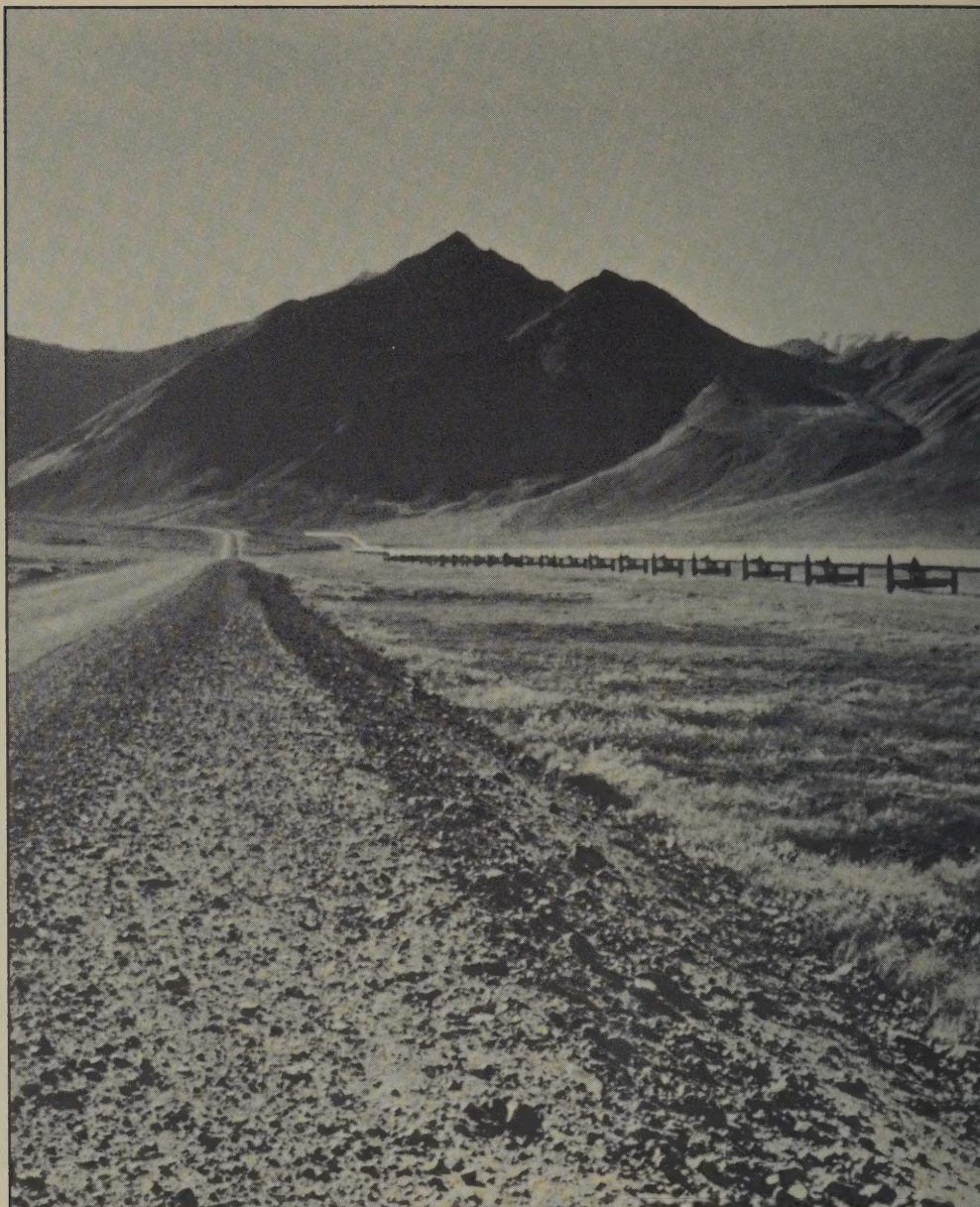
BLM's Branch of Mapping Sciences is asked to visit local

schools about a half dozen times a year to conduct similar presentations. "This is the fourth school we've been to this year," says Balen. "It's fun, especially when the students are as bright and inquisitive as these kids." Mapping Sciences also gives on-site tours and presentations for high schools and university classes on a regular basis.

After the presentation, Panos asked the students if they might be interested in working in a science related field when they grew up. Panos and Balen shared a smile as over half the students raised their hands.

—Teresa McPherson

Utility Corridor plan boosts recreation, conservation, mining



The Dalton Highway passes through the Utility Corridor. This view is at milepost 257, eight miles from the Dalton Highway. It shows all the elements typical of the area: mountains, the pipeline, the road and tundra.

More land opened for mining and state selection, better places for recreation along the Dalton highway and a wilderness area are among the decisions in the Utility Corridor resource management plan.

This plan covers more than 15 million acres in the Central Arctic Management Area and within the Trans-Alaska pipeline utility corridor. Within that overall study area, BLM administers 6.1 million acres of surface land and 5.8 million acres of mineral estate, much of it along the corridor through which the Trans-Alaska Pipeline passes.

The plan considered a wide range of possible land uses. Now, with the

completion and approval of the plan, the BLM can plan for and take action on the many issues facing these northern lands and their resources, and the people who visit and live on them.

Key provisions include:
Energy Transportation Corridor

- The Utility Corridor lands, including the Dalton Highway, were reserved as a utility and transportation corridor. The plan reaffirms that the primary purpose of the Utility Corridor is for energy transportation.



s north of Atigun Pass, looking south. Here are

Land Actions

- The plan opens 632,000 acres within the Utility Corridor for state selection, including a portion of the Coldfoot unit, lands in the Sagavanirktok and "Gas Arctic" units, and lands south of the Yukon River.

- After considering the complexity and uncertainty of management responsibilities associated with navigability and State and Native land selections, the BLM Director has decided that **no further wild and scenic river studies** will be conducted by BLM in Alaska until future congressional action changes the situation.

Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

- The management plan establishes **13 areas of critical environmental concern** in the study area, totaling 505,240 acres. Each area has a special resource, such as rare or sensitive plants, scenic values, lambing areas, mineral licks, hot springs, unusual geology, peregrine falcon nesting areas, and recreational and cultural fisheries.

- One area of environmental concern, Toolik Lake, has been given additional protection as a **research natural area**. It has been used as a research site by the University of Alaska Fairbanks for several years.

Wilderness

- In BLM's ANILCA Section 1001 Report Findings and Recommendations, sent to Congress in December 1989, the agency recommended that 41,000 acres of the upper Nigu River area be included in the National Wilderness Preservation System. BLM will **continue to manage the tract as wilderness** until Congress acts on that recommendation.

Dalton Highway development nodes

- To accommodate the increased traffic on the Dalton Highway, four development nodes were identified to encourage private concessionaires to build road-related services. Two nodes, Coldfoot and Yukon Crossing, have already been developed under a previous land use plan. **Chandalar Shelf and Happy Valley** have been identified for future development.

The Coldfoot and Happy Valley nodes have been made available for state selection.

Cooperative Planning

- The plan also emphasizes the importance of **cooperative federal and state planning** for the study area.

Recreation

- Recognizing the increasing recreational demands from the public on the study area, the BLM is working on a **Recreation Area Management Plan for the Dalton corridor** that will identify public recreational needs and will list facilities and improvements to meet those needs.

The first work on Utility Corridor plan started in 1986 when BLM's Arctic District staff began studying a 15-million-acre area that included the Central Arctic Management Area, the Venetie Planning Block, and the utility corridor for the trans-Alaska pipeline. The signing of the Record of Decision marks a new focus for multiple use management of BLM-administered public lands in northern Alaska.

Copies of the Record of Decision may be obtained at the public affairs office in Fairbanks at 1150 University Ave., and in Anchorage in the Federal Building, 222 W. 7th Avenue ; or phone (907) 271-5555.

—Sharon Durgan Wilson

Big snows smother ski trails

Equipment breaks, trails become dangerous

Record snowfalls in interior Alaska this winter may have turned BLM's White Mountains National Recreation Area into a winter wonderland, but they also created problems for the Bureau of Land Management's recreation staff. These are the folks in charge of keeping 280 miles of trails open in this popular recreation area near Fairbanks.

“

The Fairbanks area was inundated by more than 101 inches of snow before the first of February. Most years it receives only 65-70 inches for the entire winter.

”

—Jack Mercer, Fairbanks weather forecaster.

The trails loop around the recreation area and connect six public recreation cabins to the two access points on the Elliott Highway. The trails are used throughout the winter by dog mushers, snowmobilers, cross-country skiers and snowshoers,



The million-acre White Mountains National Recreation Area is a favorite playground for Alaskan families and other adventurers who enjoy winter outdoor activities.

according to Dick Bouts, lead for the recreation staff of the Steese/White Mountains District.

People started reserving cabins sooner this year than ever before, because the snow started so early. But near Christmas, BLM had to cancel reservations due to the deep snow.

“We just couldn't guarantee clear trails when over 26 inches of snow fell in just four days,” said Bouts

At first people planning trips to the White Mountains area were delighted, but then the continuing snow covered trails. It created hazardous conditions.

Drifted areas of powder snow on top of compact snow measured well over six feet deep in late January, and people could only travel on established, packed trails. To stray from the beaten path could mean several hours of digging out.

BLM's Steese/White Mountains District staff people tried to keep the trails connecting the cabins broken and packed, but they were plagued by snow machines that were constantly breaking down, after years of heavy use.

Relief came at the end of January

when the district office bought four new snow machines. Two lightweight machines, designed to ride on top of the snow, are being used to break the trails. The other two machines are heavier and more powerful. As they follow, pulling sleds and the trail grooming machine, their weight packs the snow on the trail.

“This purchase was a real morale booster for my staff,” said District Manager Roger Bolstad, “When they left town with the old machines, they never knew if they would make it back home or have to camp out in the snow.”

As the days lengthened in the far north, more people were again reserving the cabins and traveling the trails, enjoying the spring sunshine on the snow.

—Sharon Durgan Wilson

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Resource Library opens world of information to researchers

Research has never been so easy, says BLM Supervisory Librarian Martha Shepard.

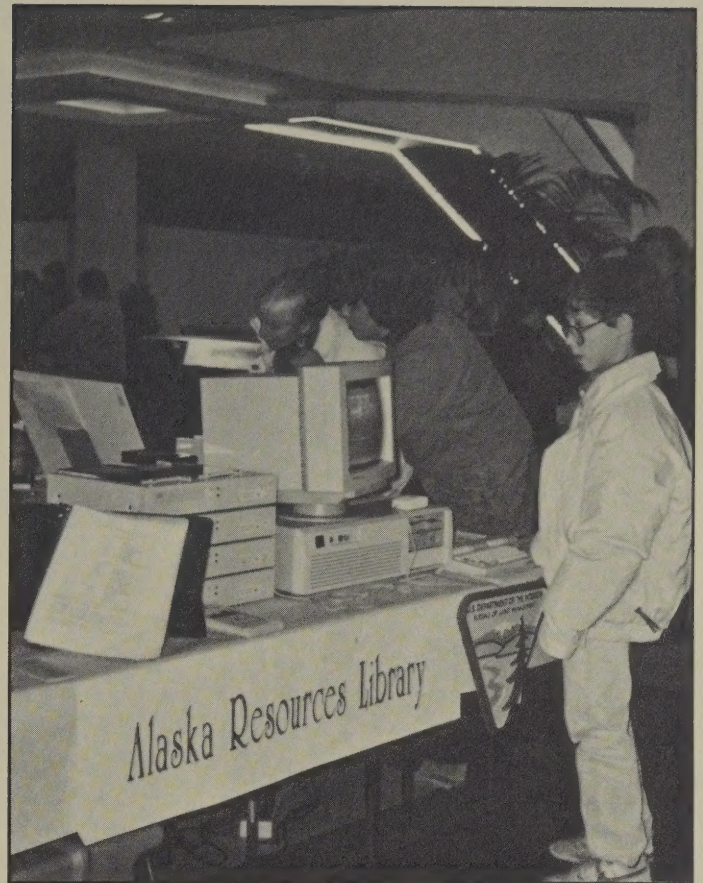
"You know how you go to a card file or computer screen catalogue and find just the exact thing you want," says Shepard. "And then the librarian tells you, 'You'll have to wait three weeks. We don't have that here—we'll have to send for it.'"

"Well, the computer library index disk has the *whole article* on the disk."

Not only that, people can go into the BLM Alaska Natural Resources Library in the Anchorage Federal Building, sit at the special new computer terminal, and presto! . . . they have the holdings of every library in the Pacific northwest—**12 million books**—at their fingertips.

The library's new setup uses compact discs containing huge bibliographic files. One of these is the Worldwide Fish and Wildlife disc, another the Cold Regions Engineering disc. Both of these will give a researcher the titles of books and magazine articles in those fields plus a printout of the actual text of articles from various computer-related magazines. Thus all of the research can be done at one sitting.

Librarian Cathy Vitale reports the new setup is already popular with firms and agencies outside of BLM. "Engineering firms and consultants, The Nature Conservancy, and the Corps of Engineers are all doing special research projects; and a number of individuals

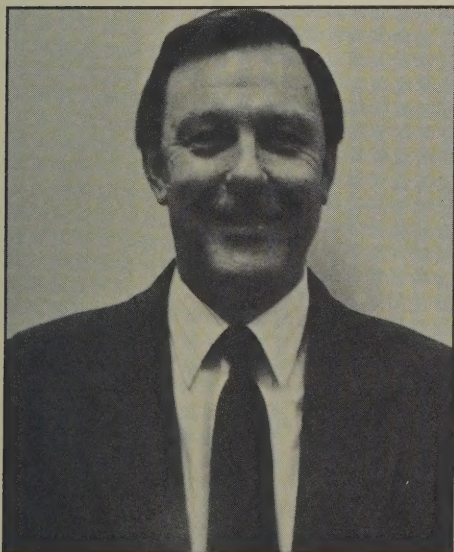


Student gets a hands-on look at new automated catalogue program as Assistant Librarian Cathy Vitale (center) explains the program at BLM's booth in Anchorage shopping mall.

are using the Laser "cat" [catalogue] to search library holdings in the Pacific Northwest."

Shepard adds, "If you're looking up anything from hot tubs to an encyclopedia on food, you can come in any time the library is open, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Fridays except federal holidays.

"And remember, if it's an article, they can fax it to us!"
—Jane G. Mangus



William Calkins

Calkins new Associate State Director

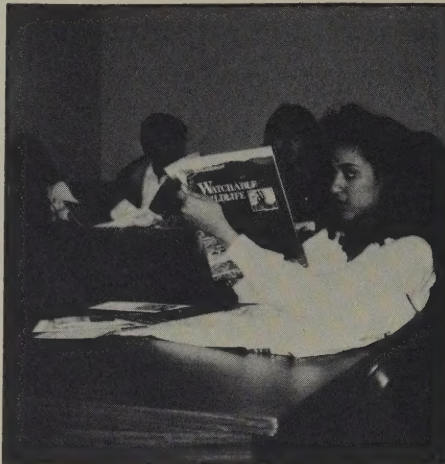
William C. Calkins is BLM's new associate state director for Alaska. He, his wife Maureen and son Nicholas are arriving in Alaska early this month from Vale, Oregon, where he has served as district manager since 1985.

During the past five years he has been active in recent Wild and Scenic River designations and promoted a multi-million dollar project to construct and manage a National Oregon Trail interpretive center at Flagstaff Hill near Baker City.

Between 1976 and 1985 he served as associate district manager in the Las Vegas District, chief of planning and chief of the Branch of Environment in BLM's Nevada State Office. From 1970 to 1976 he held various posts in Washington, D.C.

State Director Ed Spang commented, "Bill brings with him management and resource experiences that will complement those of the Alaska management team. We look forward to having Bill join us in pursuing the challenges and opportunities ahead."

BLM's Alaska Fire Service is co-operating with the **University of Alaska-Fairbanks** to first develop, then evaluate a new **fire science program** at the University. Marv Robertson, chief of fire operations, is BLM's representative on a committee that will help the faculty develop goals, study needs for fire-fighting training, and coordinate information between local fire-fighting agencies and the public. Graduates of this program can be tested by BLM and may qualify for various fire suppression jobs.



Students from an Anchorage high school civics class look over BLM's Watchable Wildlife guide during a recent visit to the BLM-Alaska State Office of Public Affairs. Soon to be published: a new brochure about Watchable Wildlife on BLM lands in Alaska.

Grayling fishing in BLM-managed Beaver Creek National Wild and Scenic River is featured in a new book, *Twenty Great Alaska Fishing Adventures*, published by Alaska Angler Publications of Fairbanks.

The **VISTA program** (Volunteers in Service to America) has approved two volunteers to work for BLM in Alaska in 1991. One will work in the Alaska State Office, the other in the Fairbanks offices.

Secretary of the Interior Manuel Lujan, Jr., has named six Alaskans to serve three-year terms on BLM's Northern and Southern Advisory Councils. On the Northern council: Warren O. Matumeak, Karen Cedzo and Kenneth Hughes; on the southern council: Mark Johnson, Mrs. Kohar Bertan and James Barkeley.

Alaska State Director Ed Spang has launched a project to study the total process BLM uses to convey land to the State of Alaska, Native corporations, and individuals. The project will include a new tracking system based on the computerized Land Information System and will involve the entire BLM organization.

"We hope to streamline the conveyance process," said Spang, "and focus on coordination, both within BLM and with State and Native clients."



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Editor/designer: Jane G. Mangus
Computer layout: Jim Mroczek

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